

TAKING A BITE OUT OF SCHOOL ABSENCES

Dental issues are leading cause of missed school days

For many Arizona kindergarteners, one of the threats to academic success may not be a lack of knowledge, but a lack of good oral health.

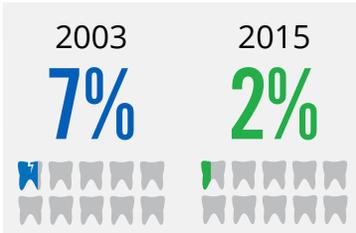
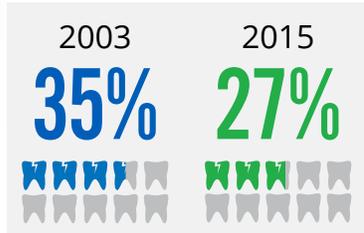
Tooth decay — the single most common chronic childhood disease — can cause lasting harm to a child's health and impact their cognitive and social development. As a child enters school, it can lead to missed school days, inability to focus, anxiety and other factors that affect academic success.

First Things First partnered with the Arizona Department of Health Services to coordinate a statewide oral health study including dental screenings of 3,630 kindergarten children attending Arizona's public schools and a survey of their caregivers. The study shows that the prevention efforts of FTF and early childhood system partners are paying off.

SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT

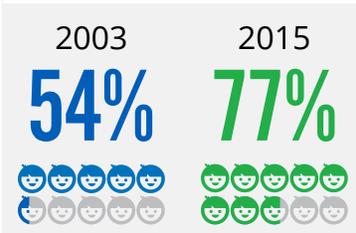
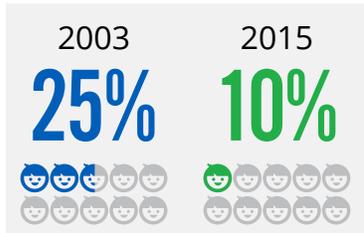
Fewer AZ kindergarteners have untreated tooth decay.

Fewer AZ kindergarteners have dental pain or infection.



Fewer AZ kindergarteners have never been to a dentist.

More AZ kindergarteners visited a dentist in the last year.



MAKING AN IMPACT

FIRST THINGS FIRST

As part of Arizona's early childhood system, First Things First has made strategic investments in efforts to prevent early childhood tooth decay and promote positive oral health for Arizona children birth to age 5 and their families.

From 2010 to 2015



CHALLENGES REMAIN

Too many young children in AZ experience tooth decay.

AZ kindergarteners

US 5-year-olds



2015

2010



Children from low-income households and some racial and ethnic groups have higher levels of dental disease.



22% Many AZ parents do not know that their child's AHCCCS (Medicaid) coverage includes dental care benefits.